

OUR CHILDREN = OUR DESTINY

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Doing the right thing day

Urban League and community team up to celebrate inner city youth on September 21

The Urban League of Portland will join more than 100 Urban League affiliates across the country on Saturday, September 21 in celebrating inner city youth who are "doing the right thing" at school, at home, and in their community.

The day will kickoff a five-year campaign of events sponsored by the League to celebrate the achievements of inner city youth. The initiative is funded by a five-year grant from the Borden Foundation.

Plans for the kickoff and for other events during the school year are being made by a group of students in the Urban League's E. Shelton Hill Achievers Corps, a leadership development group. President Bill Clinton, Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber and Portland Mayor Vera Katz have proclaimed September 21 as "Doing The Right Thing Day" in honor of the event.

Portland events will kickoff with a march departing from the Urban League at 10 N. Russell St. at 9 am and traveling north on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. before arriving at Jefferson High School's football field at 10:30 am. A jamboree will begin at the field at 11 am and conclude at 3 pm.

Participants in the march are asked to arrive before 8:30 am to register. The first 1000 people to register will receive a free t-shirt and the school that brings the most students will receive a \$500 grant.

The jamboree will feature a student talent contest with a \$500 grand prize, student poetry readings, and guest speakers including Lincoln High School student Tawan Davis, Portland Public Schools Superintendent Jack Bierwirth, City Commissioner Charlie Hales, and Urban League President Lawrence J. Dark.

"Our goal is to start this new school year by focusing the community's attention on youth who are doing the right thing, everyday right here in Portland," said Mr. Dark. "We as a community must help change the public image of youth -- especially African American and other youth of color -- who are not gang involved or affected."

The jamboree will include information

booths about local youth services and carnival games.

Youth development is the current focus for the Urban League Movement around the country. The National Urban League has chosen "Our Children = Our Destiny" as its motto through the year 2000.

Youth speak out

This summer we asked young men and women in the Urban League's Summer Youth Employment Program to tell us what they thought of the National Urban League's new motto, "Our Children = Our Destiny." Here are some of the replies we received:

"The parents and adults have to teach us to become men and women of the future. Because without a path shown there is no path to follow."

-- Jacy Jointer

(continued on page two)

*Volunteer
Helloise Hill
with students in
the Urban
League's
Whitney Young
after-school
program.*



President's Column

Why we need to celebrate our youth

By Lawrence J. Dark

Millions of America's children do the right thing everyday. Too often their story goes unreported in the media and some forget that children are an asset, not a liability.

High expectations begin in the home and in the community.

On Saturday, September 21, the Urban League of Portland will recognize youth who are "doing the right thing," particularly youth of color. We invite you to join us in recognizing them by showing your support at this event.

Many African American youngsters and other youth of color in Portland are excelling in school. Many others are making genuine academic progress, and take part in constructive extracurricular activities and community service. These youngsters deserve to have their success stories told -- loudly and proudly.

We know these stories are true because at the Urban League we see them every day. This summer 25 African American and Hispanic youth teamed up to do yard work for low-income seniors. One youth caught a bus at 5 am each day in Hillsboro in order to get to work on time. Other middle schoolers spent the summer teaching elementary school kids about the environment in our Urban Ecosystems program.

On September 21 we will honor the future generation that is doing the right thing. What could be more important? These youngsters need our full support.

We are also challenging all young people with our high expectations for them. They are likely to live up to what we believe of them. Our challenge to all young people is this: if you work hard now, in school and outside of school, you will be rewarded, you will be celebrated.

Many children growing up in the inner city are being cheated of the supports that are



Lawrence J. Dark

essential for their success -- education and social development are key among them. Our young people need affection and direction from adults, and every adult has a role to play.

A better job of educating poor children can be done with high expectations, challenging academic material and flexible instructional techniques. Activities outside of school are critical to student success, especially between the hours of 3:00 to 6:00 pm, when many students are unsupervised by adults.

The Urban League's after-school tutorial program and other programs need to have enough resources to ensure that every child has access to an after-school program with caring adults.

The most important thing we can do for our children is to have high expectations of them -- to make them believe they can learn, to tell them they're going to have to learn really difficult, challenging things, to assess whether they're learning or not, and to hold them accountable as well as to reward them.

Most children are very eager to learn. Those that aren't have probably been convinced they can't. I believe that once you have high standards and high expectations, there is an unlimited number of things that can be done.

Today's younger generation will live in a time of the greatest possibility America has ever known. But in order to make it really work, those possibilities have to be

available to all Americans who are willing to work for them.

This initiative is not a "Black thing": it is a people thing. People who are African American, Caucasian, Latino, Native American, Asian American, straight, gay, lesbian, disabled, young, old -- all who live on this planet we share -- need to come together to show that we believe our children are our destiny.

Portland and Oregon have an opportunity to raise a generation of healthy, motivated young people who behave in ways that make us proud. Let's take on this challenge and give America the kind of future it deserves.

Youth speak out

"Our children are the new seed of life that is destined to control this nation. Many say that the new generation, Generation X, will fail and all will be lost. But if we mold our children to become the pillars of the community and future teachers of America, we will become what so many have said we will not."

-- Kenny Lyday

"We as kids have to change the way things are. Our destiny is to make peace and get rid of the drugs and stop looking up to bigger people who sell drugs and fight and kill each other."

-- Anthony Reynolds

"We are setting an example for younger kids. We are role models for them and we need to help them."

-- Mike Tune

"We decide the outcome of our planet. We equal the future. We will vote. We will teach. We will give... We will grow up one day and lead on until our children take over."

-- Cameron Garth

"The way we act now will determine what the future will bring."

-- Teressa Jeffries

"Without children we have no destiny. If we don't take care of the children, educate them, and love them, and teach them a strong work ethic -- without those basic building blocks we won't have a future."

-- Anonymous



Staff and student at Urban League's Portland Street Academy

Urban Leagues to focus on youth development

The bottom line goal of the Urban League Movement is to promote the economic self-reliance of African Americans, our principal constituency, and of other disadvantaged Americans. Our strategy for accomplishing this begins with working to develop our children for the 21st century. Helping inner city, low income children to develop socially and academically is not a new activity for the Urban League: but it is one our board, staff, and volunteers are approaching with new vigor. Hence, the new slogan of the National Urban League, "Our Children = Our Destiny."

This newsletter is dedicated to our youth development agenda, which includes the following programs:

Education Programs

E. Shelton Hill Achievers Corps (ESCHAC)
 Male & Female Responsibility Programs
 Portland Street Academy
 Urban Ecosystems
 Whitney Young After School Tutorial Program

Youth & Family Programs

Big Brother/Big Sister
 Common Bond: Parent Education for Young Families
 Counseling Services
 Diversion for Juvenile Offenders
 Hispanic Outreach
 Level 7

Rainbow Sexual Minority Support Group
 Southeast Asian Outreach
 Youth Employment

**The White House
 Washington
 August 23, 1996**

Warm greetings to everyone gathered for the National Urban League Youth Celebratory Event.

The youth of today represent our hope for the future and the promise of a better tomorrow. As we approach the twenty-first century, now more than ever we must reaffirm our commitment to providing our children with the love, support, education, and opportunity they need to thrive and become healthy and productive citizens.

Events like yours help us to recognize anew that working together in a spirit of community is not just a hope but a necessity, and that our individual dreams can be realized only through our shared efforts. Like the young people participating in this year's event, we must all take responsibility for ourselves, our conduct, and our attitudes.

I applaud the efforts of the many volunteers, participants, business

cosponsors, and community leaders who together have worked to make the National Urban League's "Do The Right Thing Day" a reality. Your hard work is a testament to the ideal of putting the needs of our children first. By nurturing the confidence, hope, pride and self-esteem of our young people, you are helping to ensure a brighter future for us all, and I extend my deepest thanks.

Best wishes for a wonderful event.

Bill Clinton

Thank you to our friends and sponsors

The Urban League wishes to thank the following sponsors and organizations for participating in "Do The Right Thing Day":

Sponsors

The Borden Foundation
 Pepsi Cola
 Portland Public Schools
 Sylvan Learning Center
 Unforgettable Entertainment

Organizations with Booths

Buffalo Soldiers
 Campfire
 Community Treehouse
 Cultural Recreation Band
 Hoffman Construction
 House of Umoja
 Junior Achievement
 Kaiser Permanente
 Mothers Against Gang Violence
 Multnomah County Dept. of Community Services
 Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs
 POIC Vocational Program
 Positive Community Project
 STARS Program
 United Negro College Fund
 Urban League Guild
 Warner Pacific College
 X-PAC

Thanks also to the program staff of the Urban League of Portland

To Be Equal

Doing The Right Thing

By Hugh B. Price
President, National Urban League

Many of us know all too well the problems which have engulfed many young people and their parents and relatives who are struggling to survive in poor, inner-city neighborhoods. It is a frightening picture, for them and for us as a nation, one which William Junius Wilson, the renowned sociologist and an Urban League trustee, has examined with fresh urgency in his new book, *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*.

But it is wrong -- and harmful -- to think that the difficulties of some youth in inner-city neighborhoods describe the plight of them all. In fact, many are striving to better themselves by succeeding in school and contributing to the larger community.

We do them and the larger society a disservice if we don't recognize that: Those youth who are "doing the right thing" can be sources of inspiration to their peers by showing them that even in the face of significant adversity it is possible to do well.

Those are some of the reasons the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis and more than one hundred other Urban League affiliates across the country, from Boston to Birmingham to Portland, Oregon, have chosen September 21 to celebrate the youths in their communities who are "doing the right thing."

Parades, proclamations, art displays, talent shows, cookouts, and the awarding of certificates of honor to young people are just some of the ways our affiliates intend to show young people that we care about their doing well and being well. Our slogan "Our Children = Our Destiny" is not merely a slogan. It is a *belief*.

This day of celebration, to be held annually from now on, is part of our effort to mobilize all segments of the national black community to exert greater energy at shaping their present and their future.

The response at the national and local level has been invigorating.



Hugh B. Price

Black fraternities and sororities and other communal groups have pledged their financial support, and their members' time and effort, as have churches and community organizations. And as we had hoped, the response has been most sharply felt at the local level.

For example, in its five-month campaign to establish a youth development fund -- to help youth-oriented programs "put an adult in the life of any African-American youth who needs it" -- our St. Louis affiliate has received pledges for more than \$165,000.

Nearly one third of that amount was recently pledged by the Evans Place Association, a civic group of black homeowners. (The affiliate has now suspended its fund-raising until the winter in order to not conflict with the local United Way fund-raising campaign which has just gotten under way.) Most of the rest has come in small amounts from groups and individuals.

"We've received great support," said Pamela Bolden, director of public relations for the St. Louis affiliate. "It shows that people in the community understand the seriousness of the problems and that we have to be more energetic in attacking them ourselves."

Young people in Birmingham, Alabama have been involved in the planning for the September 21 day of celebration right from the beginning, said Laquita S. Bell, the affiliate president. They have planned not

only an awards ceremony honoring ten young achievers, they have also established, with the help of local media, a seminar to train them in the techniques of the print and electronic media.

In Boston, Joan Wallace-Benjamin, president of the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts, said that the city's school superintendent, Thomas Payzant, and the regional head of the federal Department of Education, Jan Paschal, will speak at the ceremonies there at Roxbury Community College. And in Portland, both Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber and Mayor Vera Katz have proclaimed the day "Doing The Right Thing Day," and Portland School Superintendent Jack Bierwirth has been an enthusiastic supporter, according to Lawrence J. Dark, our affiliate's president.

The flyer announcing the event in Portland asks the question at the heart of our campaign: "Do you believe that our children are our future? Do you want to support our youth?"

If you do, then join us.

The Seven Principles of NULITES

Student volunteers in the Urban League's E. Shelton Hill Achievers Corps are asked to uphold the principles that guide our youth initiative NULITES (National Urban League Incentives to Excel and Succeed), which teach the attributes that lead to success in life:

Strive: For excellence at home, school and in community.

Work: Within your neighborhood to further its development.

Respect: Your mind and body, as well as the minds and bodies of others.

Celebrate: Your heritage and culture, as well as those of others.

Create: A better future for your family, other people and yourself.

Care: For the world's people and environment.

Promote: A universal spirit of cooperation and peace.